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Coriolan/us and the Limits of ‘Immersive’

Andrew Filmer

You’re stood on tarmac, facing the massive blue doors of Hangar 858. Heeding a yelled instruction to put your headphones on, the pre-performance conversations you’ve been enjoying with those around you falter as you are separated into the individuated sonic envelope your headphones afford. You hear the low undertones, drumbeats, and pulses of John Hardy’s composition. The sound intensifies. One half of the large door ahead begins to shift, slowly, rolling back. The opening is an invitation to enter, but the people in front of you aren’t moving. There’s hesitation, then the impulse to advance ripples through the gathered bodies. You are on the move.

The opening of the door reveals a monochrome world of concrete inside, a vast curved ceiling like some kind of immense ribcage and an expanse of polished floor. Ahead, two parallel breezeblock walls cut across the space, an opening in the middle revealing another expanse of floor beyond. Two caravans—a warm light spilling from their windows and stationary figures visible within—sit to one side. But what catches and holds your eye is the play of movement across two large projection screens suspended side by side from the curved ceiling at the far end of the hangar. On these you see two different views of the audience of which you

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are a part, advancing into the hangar and somehow rendered more solid, a crowd of people. Camera operators, standing in plain view before you, are documenting your entrance, projecting your uncertain interest back at you. You are the spectacle in a largely empty room.

You hear the horn of the van before you see it. At first, it sounds like part of the soundtrack that is audible through the headphones, except that it differentiates itself through its growing proximity. You catch sight of the van on one of the screens. The audience part as the van pushes its way through, horn insistently blaring. You step out of its way and it rolls past, tracing a large slow curve across smooth concrete floor in the face of the audience. From the open side door, a figure is leaning out, the First Citizen (John Rowley), with baseball bat in hand. He scowls:

‘You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?’

Through the headphones his voice is close and clear in your ears, while also echoing in the ambient acoustic of the hangar:

‘Are you prepared to stand fast until the senate agrees that it’s us who decide the price of bread?’

This ‘us’ establishes a collective identity for the gathering of which you are a part. As a spectator, you are part of an audience now figured as the crowd of ‘mutinous citizens’ that populates the opening scene of Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*. But this figuring remains open, able to be adopted or ignored; you can determine your own relation to it just as you can determine your own physical proximity to the performer who has now disembarked from the van.

As the audience clusters around the stationary van, you could approach for a closer view, but you can also look to the screens where the live action is being simultaneously remediated through the use of multiple live video feeds, simultaneously distancing you from the action and bringing it nearer. On the left-hand screen you see the feed supplied by a camera operator now working his way through the audience. It frames the figure of the Second Citizen (Gerald Tyler) as he tears up an image of Caius Martius (Richard Lynch), soon to be given the appellation ‘Coriolanus’. On the right-hand screen you see a feed from a remote-controlled camera traversing a wire high above you. In this configuration of distance and proximity, of multiple perspectives, your viewing is constituted as an action (Rancière

2009a, 13), and your actions as a spectator form a key element of the production's scenography. Where do you stand? To what do you attend? Situated in the midst of its unfolding—re-negotiating your position, re-directing your focus—you are re-framing the event (Fig. 21.1).

CORIOLAN/US AND/AS IMMERSIVE THEATRE

In August 2012, Mike Pearson and Mike Brookes directed *Coriolan/us* for National Theatre Wales (NTW) as part of the World Shakespeare Festival and the London 2012 Festival.¹ Based on a textual adaptation of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and Bertolt Brecht's unfinished adaptation *Coriolan*, the production followed their successful site-specific staging of Aeschylus's *The Persians* for NTW's launch year season on the Sennybridge Training Area in August 2010 (see Primavesi 2012; Pearson 2012). Staging *Coriolan/us* in a disused 1930s-era aircraft hangar adjacent to RAF St Athan in South Wales, Pearson and Brookes made sophisticated use of



Fig. 21.1 *Coriolanus* (Richard Lynch) questioned by the First and Second Citizens (John Rowley and Gerald Tyler) in the market-place (Photo: Mark Douet / National Theatre Wales)

wireless headsets and video projection to explore the politics of spectatorship in a media-saturated world. Re-imagining the hangar as a vast ‘theatre machine’, they constructed a dramaturgy characterised by mobility and urgency. The dramaturgy was also reflexive in the sense that Peter Boenisch (171) describes: the production prevented the closure of the fictional world and the spectators’ perception, denying any clear positioning of spectators in relation to the performance. The use of headphones to convey the spoken text removed the need for a spatial proximity or fixed spatial relations between performers and spectators, freeing performers from the rhetorical conventions of stage acting and enabling them to engage directly with one another. This intensified the acting and allowed fluidity and pace. The dramatic action shifted rapidly from one location to another, performers arriving and departing from different directions, while the audience heard every word clearly. The open space of the hangar was constructed as a public space of appearance and encounter, ‘where scenes and incidents could be placed, constructed, and walked to—finding and revealing themselves within a “field” of activity’ (Brookes).

Mike Pearson is well known for his pioneering of site-specific performance with the theatre company Brith Gof in Wales during the 1980s and 1990s. But, as Heike Roms notes, just as important as Brith Gof’s use of historic locations for its work ‘was what they allowed the company to do, namely to encourage a different kind of audience-performer interaction’ (Roms 2007, 116). The use of chapels, barns, and village schools in the early years of Brith Gof enabled the development of new theatrical techniques that emerged in tandem with ‘an increasing appreciation of cultural specificities and social congregation’ in rural Welsh-speaking communities (Pearson 2010, 3). Roms argues that Pearson’s performance work has constituted an extended exploration of ‘the relationship between theatrical and political participation’ (Roms 2004, 178). She notes how Pearson’s theatrical explorations, particularly since 1997 when he started working with artist Mike Brookes in the collective Pearson/Brookes, have grappled with the fragmentation of contemporary notions of identity and community through multi-site, intermedial works frequently involving the active participation of the audience (Roms 2004, 2007). The opportunity to produce works for NTW’s first and second seasons has enabled Pearson and Brookes to work more ambitiously at scale, exploring the contemporary political resonances of classic texts produced at site.

At first glance, *Coriolanus* could be interpreted not as an example of site-specific performance but rather as a work of immersive theatre. The

production was staged environmentally, physically situating spectators within the enclosed space of the hangar, and within the production's *mise-en-scène*, folding together space, performers, and audience in a shared situation. In addition, spectators were free to move around and re-position themselves, often in response to the movements and direct address of the actors, and in so doing, were figured as not just an actual but a fictional crowd, as 'the people' who are present in twenty-five of the twenty-nine scenes in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* (Kott, 142). These features accord with those frequently identified as key to immersive theatre practice, namely that spectators physically inhabit and respond to an encompassing imaginative environment (Machon 2013, 67–8), are free to move around and participate, and are constructed as something other than spectators during the course of the event (White 221; Alston 2012, 197, 2013, 129–30; Nield). Press reviews for *Coriolan/us* also highlighted the all-encompassing and participatory nature of the production. 'The experience', wrote Susannah Clapp in the *Observer*, 'is of being seized, overwhelmed and yet intimately spoken to' (25). In the *Guardian*, Michael Billington praised the production as 'a spectacularly immersive show' that evoked 'the sensation of being caught up in a city in a state of chaotic, revolutionary turmoil'. It had, he wrote, 'the merit of making us feel we are in the thick of events rather than detached bystanders' (38).

However, while *Coriolan/us* manifests many of the features of immersive theatre, its reflexive dramaturgy and the relational play it constructs for spectators between distance and proximity render the application of the label 'immersive' reductive. According to Josephine Machon, immersive theatre typically seeks to effect an experience of submersion or transportation in which a spectator inhabits the world created in the event (Machon 2013, 67). This inhabitation combines sensual and haptic qualities of embodied encounter and interaction and an attendant intensification of cognitive and emotional engagement. Oliver Grau argues that the relationship between critical distance and immersion isn't one of either/or, although he recognises that immersion is 'characterized by diminishing critical distance to what is shown and increasing emotional involvement in what is happening' (Grau 2007, 13). In *Coriolan/us*, the mediating technology constructed an intimacy between spectators and the dramatic action whilst also distancing them, making them aware of their own 'implication' within the hangar and the event and encouraging a consciousness of themselves as part of an audience.² This provided spectators with an experience of being in public, registering how, in the movements

of bodies, their clustering and dispersing, ‘everybody sees and hears from a different position’ (Arendt and Canovan, 57), and an experience of ‘being singular plural’— of experiencing the ‘singularly plural’ and ‘plurally singular’ nature of their being (Nancy, 28). Adrian Kear and Patrick Primavesi (2013) both identify Pearson and Brookes’s specific interrogation of the political in *Coriolan/us*. Kear discerns a pervasive ‘logic of division at every level of the performance’s operation’ (Kear, 181), foregrounding dissensus, fragmentation and disagreement. Primavesi observes that Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* ‘is a play about politics *as* performance’ (Primavesi 2013, 167), and interprets Pearson and Brookes’s adaptation as enabling reflection on ‘the performance of an audience in public’ through its ‘politics of relation and “distanced” participation’ (178).

This encouragement of reflexive awareness sits at odds with immersive theatre that valorises immediacy, sensuality, and individuality. For instance, Felix Barrett states that, in Punchdrunk’s work, ‘If ever an audience becomes aware of themselves as *audience*, then we’ve probably slightly failed’ (Barrett in Machon, 161). Writing in 1999 before the popularisation of immersive theatre, Baz Kershaw considered the possibilities of an ‘*aesthetics of total immersion*’ (italics in original, 194), placing a stress on the potential for reflexivity and communal experience. Kershaw argues that the political and ethical possibilities of Enrique Vargas’s performative maze *The Labyrinth* (1996) consisted in the way it provided a framework for bringing people *together* (208). Encountering the inhabitants of *The Labyrinth* alone, participants were destabilised; their reliance on sight removed within the claustrophobic interiors of the maze, they were invited to engage via smell, hearing, and touch, foregrounding sensual experience. However, Kershaw suggests that *The Labyrinth* encouraged reflexivity in its participants through the way in which the performance was positioned in relation to an external context characterised by global cultural flows and networks of risk and trust. Kershaw (1999, 208) states the maze ‘created a performative framework within which people could be together in simple ways that had profound ramifications’, encouraging ‘an acute awareness of the provisional nature of any system of cultural exchange’ (213). Observing more recent examples of theatre that stresses total immersion—exemplified by the work of Punchdrunk—Adam Alston argues that ‘[a]ttention tends to be turned inwards, towards the experiencing self’, such that a spectator’s participatory response ‘becomes its own site of aesthetic appreciation’ (Alston 2013, 130). Alston’s concern is that much immersive theatre is enmeshed in a neo-liberal logic, effectively

promoting an entrepreneurial individualism. The metaphor of immersion itself connotes a strict subject-object divide, as Gareth White has discussed. Although the term is used to signify the 'deep involvement' of the spectator in a work, White argues that the assumption of the metaphor is 'that we move within the artwork, intimately close to it, but still distinct from it' (228). By contrast, the pervasive logic of division that Kear discerns in *Coriolan/us* is a means by which Pearson and Brookes construct an array of relational interplays.

TAXONOMIES OF SITE-SPECIFICITY

The real issue at stake in this discussion is not whether *Coriolan/us* can or should be categorised as 'immersive' as opposed to 'site-specific' but rather the way in which the production reveals the shortcomings of a taxonomic approach to the broad field of 'site-specific' or 'site-based' performance practice. Arguably, contemporary immersive theatre constitutes an extension and intensification of techniques of 'site-sympathetic' and 'promenade' performance, and the overlaps between 'immersive' and 'site-specific' work are significant. In *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance* (2013), Josephine Machon complains about the inappropriate use of the term 'immersive' to describe participatory or experiential performance work. Although she sets out criteria by which to gauge whether a performance offers the potential for 'holistic' or 'total' immersion, the range of artists and companies she discusses as exemplary producers of immersive theatre—including Punchdrunk, Back to Back Theatre, Wildworks, Janet Cardiff, and Adrian Howells—reinforces the very difficulty of offering a clear distinction.

Site-specificity is itself a notoriously slippery concept, arising 'precisely in uncertainties over the borders and limits of work and site' (Kaye, 215). Noting the radical changes to the logic of site-specific art and performance since the 1960s, Miwon Kwon states that the term 'site specificity' has itself 'become a site of struggle' (2). Critical terms have proliferated as scholars have sought to describe differing and contested definitions of 'site' and to model a changing array of relations between sites, artists, works, spectators, and communities. On the opening pages of *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002), Kwon (1–2) lists terms artists and scholars have invented, including some that reference the concept of site ('site-determined, site-oriented, site-referenced, site-conscious, site-responsive, site-related') and others that

attempt to pin down the nature of specificity ('context-specific, debate-specific, audience-specific, community-specific, project-based'). Although this certainly signals 'an attempt to forge more complex and fluid possibilities for the art-site relationship' (2), it also does little to aid understanding of what Mike Pearson calls the 'particularities of site work' (Pearson 2010, 16)—that is, the practices (both artistic and spectatorial) that such work entails and the particular moments, encounters, and effects it enables.

Neither 'immersive' nor 'site-specific', then, are particularly useful as heuristics for assessing the specifics of artistic practice; rather, both work as umbrella terms that signify certain general relational dynamics that *may* be present as well as the positioning of the work in relation to genealogies of practice. Neither term is helpful in specifying the aesthetic and dramaturgical logics employed by artists nor the sorts of spectatorial engagement and participation these might engender. Bertie Ferdman contends that the term 'site-specific' has become so generic as to be useless. Describing four 'site-specific' works performed in hotels, she highlights how little they have in common except that they all took place in hotels. As she outlines, 'the landscapes, logic, logistics, and influences of these "hotels" are each also very different, making even this locational similarity obsolete' (Ferdman, 12).

The real and meaningful differences between works that are variously labelled as 'immersive' or 'site-specific' exist in the nature of their critical and conceptual address to their location, to existing models of practice, and to dramaturgical logics. Examining dramaturgic conventions, Peter Boenisch argues convincingly that the oft-cited division between text-based and devised theatre-making practices in the UK is a largely false one. Rather, the crucial distinction lies in whether a given production adheres to conventional dramaturgic logics that privilege 'synthesis, coherence, and closure' (Boenisch, 163) or whether it challenges these through a post-dramatic refusal or subversion of such logics. Robin Nelson makes an analogous point in relation to intermedial theatre practices when he states that 'any general assumptions about the effect of such practices may be unhelpful since they function in different ways in respect of different intentions' (Nelson, 48).

Given this, I suggest that current scholarship on site-specificity and immersive theatres needs to adopt a more interrogative and inductive approach rather than one that perpetuates the proliferation of taxonomies. This involves examining the experiential textures of performances in detail, elucidating their dramaturgic and aesthetic logics, particularly the

ways in which they situate and orient spectators, and the nature of the participation they invite, require, or coerce. Importantly, it needs to be based on a researcher or critic's personal experience of a work so as to assess its diverse and specific effects.³ In response to debates on the concept and practice of participation in the visual arts and performance, Carl Lavery has suggested that rather than define participation or identify the type of politics provoked by a work as a means of sketching out genealogies of practice, scholars consider questions of pragmatics or technique (Lavery and Williams, 7–8). Arguing that participation is inherent in any relation between a viewer and an artwork, Lavery suggests that 'our understanding of the different ways in which participation is thought about and practiced by artists has tended to be overlooked' (8). This suggestion has implications for the study of site-specific and immersive performance. How do artists working in these forms practice participation? How do they allow for participation in the specificity of their art-making through the logics of their works? Applying these questions to the broad range of site-specific and immersive works means considering the relational specificities of performances rather than creating new categories for them in ever-expanding taxonomies. In what follows, I examine the relational specificities in *Coriolan/us* with my focus directed at the compositional logics of the performance and the siting and embodied experience of the spectator.

REFLEXIVE DRAMATURGY AND REVERBERANT LITERALISM

In *Coriolan/us*, you are implaced within the unforgiving concrete environs of Hangar 858. The hangar is a difficult, tiring environment; the polished concrete underfoot is hard and the immense dimensions and smooth expanse of flooring offer no opportunities for rest. As an enclosure, the hangar is also an open space: 'A field under cover. A landscape with a lid' (Brookes). In the open space of the hangar, you become aware of your own body's effort to maintain its vertical stance and the hardness of the concrete seeps through your shoes. You shift your weight from leg to leg, squat, or lean against the breezeblock walls.⁴ You witness others adjusting their stance. The vast curve of the ribcage-like ceiling resonates with the spoken text, which is littered with references to the bodies of the people, the singular body of Caius Martius Coriolanus, to bodily functions, wounds, and scars. This reinforces a proprioceptive and haptic awareness; you too are here, part of the body politic of this event. The insistently hard nature of the concrete generates unsettled movement of thought as well as

body. Concrete is a deeply ambivalent material. As Adrian Forty describes, it is both modern and unmodern, natural and unnatural, the material of modernist utopias and tainted by associations with twentieth-century war, atrocity, and totalitarian excess. To inhabit the hangar over the duration of the performance with no set physical position to occupy is to find one self in a doubly unsettled landscape.

The scenographic choices made by director/designer Mike Brookes and designer Simon Banham exhibited a minimalist and subtractive logic that reinforced the performance's 'radical actuality' (Garner, 40). The design elements introduced—the two breezeblock walls that split the space and the burnt-out cars between them, the portable fluorescent lighting stands, the vehicles and caravans—were generic in their appearance and congruent with the materiality of the hangar. The costuming of the performers was vaguely contemporary, allowing them to blend in with the audience when necessary and signifying a shared austerity. The roughly contemporaneous nature of the vehicles, caravans, and costumes suggested a place not too far removed from where you already were and instead drew attention to the basic functionality of the objects and elements themselves. The pair of breezeblock walls, dividing and splitting the space, served to delineate 'here' from 'there', with the space between the no-man's land of conflict and the opening in the middle signifying the porosity of territorial boundaries. The caravans, their interiors stripped out, lined with plywood and plastered, were signifiers of a contingent, troubled domesticity. The vehicles, stripped of their makers' identification, reinforced the sense of necessitated mobility. The subtractive scenographic logic arrested and frustrated the interpretive flight towards a fictional other place by preventing easy identification of the dramatic world with particular examples of civic or military strife. As Brookes writes, 'the main thing happening, is simply "us" and "here"'.

Being equipped with headphones frees you and sets you adrift, and the remediation of the live action through multiple video feeds proliferated perspectives, fracturing the visual field and denying any possibility of a privileged or uncontested viewing position. The video feeds, and the obvious presence of the camera crews and the remote controlled cameras on wires strung across the space, created a heightened awareness of your own visibility, positioning your performance of spectatorship within the *mise-en-scène* and denying any closure of the fictional world. The two identical screens always displayed different live-mixed footage, underscoring the multiplicity of perspectives and positions, whilst the live mixing of the foot-

age and the audio took place in a fixed caravan located within the playing space. Two hand-held cameras were constantly in use on the floor, their operators negotiating the audience and in full view. One, frequently operated from shoulder-height, provided broadcast news-style footage, following conversations and picking out close-ups of speakers in fluid situations. The other camera, a high-end consumer camera, was operated from differing heights, often lower and with a wider angle, providing a more haptic engagement with events through mid-range shots. Two remotely operated overhead cameras traversed the space on wires, providing overhead surveillance footage. CCTV cameras installed in the caravans and between the breezeblock walls provided yet another kind of image. This proliferation of camera angles and their associated filmic conventions created an experience of constant tacking or shuttling between sources of stimuli from within the event, inviting you to compare and assess perspectives and reflect on your own self-positioning. As with Toneelgroep Amsterdam's heavily mediated production of *The Roman Tragedies*, the mediated image proves a significant distraction from the live action (Fig. 21.2).



Fig. 21.2 Volumnia (Rhian Morgan) and Virgilia (Bethan Witcomb) approach Coriolanus (Richard Lynch) and Aufidius (Richard Harrington) (Photo: Mark Douet / National Theatre Wales)

Throughout *Coriolan/us*, the spoken text, accompanied by live-mixed music and sound-scapes provided a coherent layer in the production's stratigraphy. This privileged the delivery of the text, allowing for a direct and subtle vocal performance and for its uninterrupted and intimate delivery to your ears. The physical and visual language of the production referenced photographic images of multiple urban conflicts in which distinctions between military and civilian combatants and agents were blurred. These included the Spanish Civil War and subsequent conflicts in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Kosovo and contemporaneously Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and the uprisings of the Arab Spring. Images from photographers Don McCullin and Jeff Wall informed the postural and gestural language of the performers, their alert watchful positions in open space, their use of vehicles for transactions and negotiations, their positioning against the breezeblock walls. The physical and visual language bristled with associations to the imagery of multiple conflicts but never resolved into direct analogy.

In his 1967 essay 'Art and Objecthood', Michael Fried famously suggested that 'the experience of literalist [minimalist] art is of an object *in a situation*—one that, virtually by definition, *includes the beholder*' (125). Nick Kaye, amongst others, notes the importance of Fried's essay in marking the beginnings of site-specificity, which Kaye argues is 'linked to the incursion of performance into visual art and architecture' (Kaye, 3). For Fried, the beholder's inclusion in a situation has especially troubling implications for perception and interpretation, namely that 'there is nothing within [the spectator's] field of vision—nothing that he takes note of in any way—that, as it were, declares its irrelevance to the situation, and therefore to the experience, in question' (127). Rather, 'everything counts' (127), resulting in a kind of 'endlessness' and 'inexhaustibility' in which the material of the work confronts the beholder in all its 'literalness' (143). Clearly, Fried is referencing minimalist sculpture in which a single beholder encounters an object, presumably in relative isolation. In theatre, the conditions are more complex, encompassing the co-presence of audience, narrative, and forms and styles of presentation. And yet, in *Coriolan/us*, a distinctly literalist aesthetic was in operation which, combined with the positioning of you—the spectator—within the *mise-en-scène*, opened up what Gaston Bachelard terms 'the resonance-reverberation doublet' (xix). This is the more conscious play of interpretation as you trace out the

connections the work evokes with your own life history and experience and the deeper reverberations that transform your consciousness, your modes of perception, and sense of who and where you are in the world. As Bachelard explains, 'In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own' (xxii). In experiencing *Coriolan/us*, you can adopt your own physical and imaginal perspectives on the event, experiencing its reverberations and composing your own poem in response (Rancière 2009a, 13).

LOCATING AND ORIENTING THE SPECTATOR

Mike Pearson has stated that his interest in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* was that it was 'always unsettling and always demanding that we think politically' (Pearson 2011). In staging their production, Pearson and Brookes, following Brecht, sought not to resolve the political conflicts embodied in Shakespeare's play but rather to articulate them theatrically and allow their contemporary resonances to be experienced. As this discussion has highlighted, their production of *Coriolan/us* also unsettles existing critical discourses around immersive and site-specific theatre, refusing any reductive attempt to fit it within existing taxonomies. Sensing this, Patrick Primavesi suggests that *Coriolan/us* is 'neither text-based nor site-specific, but equally *text-related*, *site-related* and *audience-related*' (Primavesi 2013, 177).

I am calling here for a renewed focus on dramaturgic logics as one means of identifying and attending to the key relational dynamics present in site-specific and immersive works and for greater attention to the embodied experience of spectators in their encounter with these works. This involves locating the spectator in the event, attending to how they are dramaturgically sited, and tracing the experiential implications of this siting. In much site-specific and immersive work, spectators are situated in liminal positions that destabilise perception and self (Fischer-Lichte 2008a, 95). The response this invites is for spectators to attempt to re-locate and re-orient themselves by reconsidering their existing modes of perception and reassessing their place in the world at large. Perhaps the concepts of location and orientation might offer a transversal mode of analysis that avoids the taxonomic impulse to create and define new categories, like that of 'immersive theatre', and instead focus us on what it is these works do, what they *generate* and *disclose*.

NOTES

1. *Coriolan/us* was a National Theatre Wales production in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company. It was performed on 8–18 August 2012 in Hangar 858, RAF St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan. Director/dramaturg, Mike Pearson; director/designer Mike Brookes; designer, Simon Banham; composer, John Hardy; sound design, Mike Beer; audio-visual design, Jon Street. I attended performances on 8 and 15 August.
2. In his rehabilitation of the concept of ‘place’, Edward Casey uses the term ‘implacement’ to refer to ‘one’s immediate placement’ (Casey 1993, xiii). Adopting a phenomenological approach, he explains, ‘The *im* of *implacement* stresses the action of getting in or into, and it carries connotations of *immanence* that are appropriate to the inhabitation of places’ (1993, 315). Compared with the term ‘immersed’, ‘implaced’ connotes the rich interconnections that occur between bodies and the places they inhabit, however briefly.
3. Grant Kester has argued a similar point in his study of dialogic art practice, arguing that the ‘durational commitment and the ephemeral nature of these projects pose a particular challenge to the researcher’ (Kester 2004, 189). Nevertheless, only through directly witnessing events can a researcher identify the multiple and complex interactions and relations they may enable.
4. Steel-framed plastic chairs were available in piles for those unable to stand for the length of the performance.

Thanks to Carl Lavery for many stimulating conversations on site-specificity, participation, and spectatorship that have fed the writing of this chapter.